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Seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1561 (2004) of 17 September 2004, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 19 September 2005 and requested me to continue to report periodically on progress in the implementation of its mandate. The present report covers developments since my report of 17 March 2005 (S/2005/177).

II. Major political developments

2. During the reporting period, progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement continued to be mixed.

3. Encouraging progress was made in the resettlement of internally displaced persons, repatriation of refugees, repatriation of Liberian ex-combatants and former Armed Forces of Liberia personnel from Sierra Leone, extension of State authority throughout the country, and training and restructuring of the Liberian National Police.

4. Preparations for the elections remained on track. The voter registration process, which took place from 25 April to 21 May, was successful. Following the commencement of the voter registration process, political parties increased their activities, including by holding primaries to elect presidential candidates. Fifty individuals have so far announced their intention to run for the presidency. The total number of registered political parties is now 24, and another 12 political groups are in various stages of registration. The political parties have continued to discuss among themselves possible alliances and coalitions in the build-up to the elections; the Liberian People's Party and the United People's Party formally agreed to an alliance on 27 April.

5. No incidents of violence were reported during the holding of the primaries or canvassing for members by political parties. The disputes within the former Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) faction also appear to have subsided. One group of the faction, led by Sekou Conneh, is registering as a political party. The other group, the LURD-Freedom Alliance, led by Kabineh

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Ja'neh, currently Minister of Justice and Attorney General, has not yet made its intentions clear.

6. While these developments are encouraging, the process of peace consolidation faced a number of problems. In this regard, the programmes for the reintegration of ex-combatants and the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia continued to be plagued by a lack of adequate funding.

7. The poor performance of the National Transitional Government of Liberia in the key area of economic governance also became the focus of attention of some of Liberia's international partners. The International Contact Group on Liberia, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Commission, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and UNMIL explored initiatives to enhance economic governance and transparency in the Government's management of public funds. In addition, the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, during its meeting in Stockholm on 21 April, called on the National Transitional Government of Liberia to take prompt and effective action on reported cases of corruption.

8. Furthermore, ECOWAS, with the agreement of the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Charles Gyude Bryant, decided to dispatch a team of investigators to look into allegations of corruption within the National Transitional Government. During its investigations, the ECOWAS team encountered resistance from some Government Ministers and other officials. They also met with resistance from the Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants, which filed a petition for a writ of prohibition from the Supreme Court to restrain public officers from cooperating with the investigation, claiming that it violated Liberia's sovereignty. The writ was refused by the Supreme Court on 14 April. Chairman Bryant also urged Government officials to cooperate with the ECOWAS team.

9. On 11 May, representatives of the United Nations, the European Commission, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, ECOWAS and the United States Government met in Copenhagen to explore how best to address the issue of improving economic governance by the National Transitional Government of Liberia. They reviewed the reports of the European Commission-financed audits of the Central Bank of Liberia and five State-owned enterprises, and noted that the technical and policy advice on economic governance-related issues given to the National Transitional Government over the past 18 months had not achieved the desired results, due to a lack of willingness on the part of the Government to institute reforms. They concluded that financial malfeasance and a lack of transparency and accountability were undermining the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. They therefore agreed to develop an economic governance action plan, to be presented to the Government for implementation and submitted to the Security Council for its consideration.

10. Furthermore, tensions stemming from the suspension on 14 March of the Speaker, his Deputy and the Chairpersons of the Ways and Means Committee and the Rules and Orders Committee for administrative and financial malpractice have continued in the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. A petition filed by the suspended officials is still pending before the Supreme Court. The National Transitional Legislative Assembly has maintained that the judiciary has no jurisdiction over its internal processes and has continued to function under the leadership of a newly elected Acting Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

11. Concerns about the lack of progress in improving the quality of life of the general population are increasing, particularly given the recent rise in the prices of essential commodities, including rice, fuel and cement. Although the National Transitional Government of Liberia has adopted regulations to control prices, these have not been enforced, mainly because of corruption.

12. Concerns about former President Charles Taylor's continued interference in the political process in Liberia have increased. Media reports, citing the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, indicated that Mr. Taylor may have travelled to Burkina Faso earlier this year to meet with one of the Liberian presidential candidates. These reports have been strongly denied by the Nigerian authorities. During the second meeting of the National Transitional Government of Liberia-United Nations-ECOWAS Coordination Mechanism, held in Abuja on 26 May, ECOWAS called on those who had accused Mr. Taylor of violating the conditions of his asylum in Nigeria to provide evidence thereof. Meanwhile, Mr. Taylor's political party is currently divided over allegations that during the recent party primaries he made telephone calls to influence the voting, leading to the withdrawal of one candidate from the primaries.

III. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

13. The Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia continued to meet regularly. The latter held weekly meetings, chaired by Chairman Bryant, to review the progress made in the peace process and to address emerging issues in a coordinated manner.

14. At the second meeting of the National Transitional Government of Liberia-United Nations-ECOWAS Coordination Mechanism referred to in paragraph 12, the progress and remaining challenges in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were examined. The meeting welcomed the decision taken by international partners to develop the economic governance action plan and the proposal to submit it for the consideration of the Security Council. It also emphasized that security-sector reform should include the rehabilitation of the judicial, penal and immigration sectors and called for the adoption of clear, well-defined and transparent criteria to guide individuals' inclusion in or exclusion from the sanctions list.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

15. As at 1 June, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,836 (see annex). The Mission has now completed its deployment to all 15 counties. During the reporting period, new deployments were aimed at ensuring effective security for the electoral process. In that regard, an Ethiopian company was deployed to Barclayville in Grand Kru County, while two Pakistani companies were deployed to Bopolu in Gbarpolu County and to Foya in Lofa County.

16. As at 1 June, UNMIL civilian police strength stood at 1,064, of an authorized ceiling of 1,115, including 480 officers in four formed police units and 18 corrections officers. In addition to deployments in Monrovia, UNMIL civilian police

continued to maintain a presence at the Roberts International Airport, the Spriggs Payne Airport, the Freeport of Monrovia and 24 other locations throughout the country.

17. In my last report (S/2005/177), I recommended that the Council authorize the deployment of a fifth formed police unit, composed of 120 officers, for an interim period of six months commencing in August, to enhance the Mission's capability to respond to security emergencies during the electoral period. The deployment is most important to provide UNMIL with the requisite capacity for maintaining security during the electoral period. Therefore, I would once again recommend that the Council authorize this urgently needed deployment.

18. With regard to civilian personnel, of an authorized total of 635, UNMIL currently has 494 international staff, 30 per cent of whom are women. The Mission also has 441 United Nations Volunteers, 179 of whom are working on the elections, as well as 727 national staff.

V. Security situation

19. During the reporting period, the overall security situation remained fragile, with a general climate of uneasy calm. The most serious threat to stability came from ex-combatants awaiting reintegration opportunities. Many of these ex-combatants held violent demonstrations to demand reintegration benefits and opportunities. They also threatened to disrupt the elections and to attack UNMIL personnel. Continued delays in providing these idle ex-combatants with reintegration opportunities leave them open to exploitation by manipulative political elements, particularly during the electoral period.

20. Organized groups of ex-combatants with links to influential members of the former armed factions are also illegally occupying the Guthrie rubber plantation, located on the border of Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties. In addition, organized groupings in Nimba County have held violent protests, demanding that the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration pay fees to schools that they had been attending but that had not been authorized by the National Commission to enrol ex-combatants.

21. Some Liberians have expressed concern that there may still be weapon caches in some parts of the country, including Monrovia and the Guthrie rubber plantation. However, the information received by UNMIL so far has not led to any significant discoveries of such caches. The Mission continues to conduct cordon-and-search operations on the basis of information received.

22. Another threat to Liberia's fragile stability is the "coalition of unwilling political forces", which includes individuals who are barred by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement from contesting the 11 October national elections, those on the Security Council travel-ban and assets-freeze lists and those who are benefiting economically from Liberia's instability and lack of Government authority. Such individuals are not interested in the consolidation of peace and democracy in the country.

23. Ethnic clashes also continued to pose a threat to security. On 3 April, a clash occurred between members of the Gio and Krahn ethnic groups at Youpie Podogle, Nimba County. The dispute dates back to January, when the Gios from New Youpie

prevented the Krahn from Old Youpie from collecting the remains of nine Krahns killed during the civil war. On 21 May, violent clashes over disputed property also took place in Lofa County between members of the Lorma and Mandingo ethnic groups. Also, during the voter registration process, there were allegations that some registrars were denying individuals of Mandingo origin the right to register to vote, on the grounds that they were foreigners. However, an assessment conducted by UNMIL determined that there was no evidence that a particular ethnic group was being targeted by the registrars and that the attempts by foreigners to register were minimal.

24. UNMIL troops continued to provide umbrella security throughout the country and to work on creating a safe and stable environment for the electoral process. They also conducted border patrols and cordon-and-search operations.

25. On 23 April, UNMIL took over security responsibilities at Monrovia's Freeport to enable it to meet international ship and port facility standards. Unauthorized individuals were removed, and new identification passes were issued to authorize 2,500 workers to have access to the Freeport. Efforts to enhance security and operations at the Freeport are continuing, and to that end the Liberian Seaport Police are currently participating in the training programme at the National Police Academy.

VI. Disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration

26. Since the formal closure of the disarmament and demobilization process in November 2004, UNMIL has received 286 weapons, which were either voluntarily surrendered or discovered, as well as some 31,000 assorted pieces of ammunition and some 300 pieces of unexploded ordnance, which are being destroyed.

27. UNMIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are continuing to collaborate on a five-year national community arms collection and development programme. Some $12 million is needed for the programme, of which $700,000 has been secured for pilot projects in Lofa and Grand Gedeh Counties. On 18 May, the National Commission on Small Arms was established to oversee the programme.

28. On 15 April, the first referral and counselling office for demobilized ex-combatants was opened in Monrovia. Similar offices will soon be operational in Harper, Zwedru, Buchanan, Gbarnga and Voinjama. Meanwhile, 3,901 demobilized ex-combatants have successfully completed their vocational training. As at 1 June, 29,165 ex-combatants, including 1,420 children, were participating in reintegration projects funded by the UNDP Trust Fund, the European Commission and the United States Agency for International Development. Steps are being taken to redirect the focus of reintegration projects from vocational training to agriculture and small-scale income-generating activities.

29. However, funds are urgently needed to provide reintegration opportunities for the remaining ex-combatants, who continue to be a potential source of instability, as noted in paragraph 19. A $3.4 million contribution from Sweden has reduced the shortfall to $36.2 million, and the United States of America and the European

Commission have pledged $15 million and €11 million respectively, which would further reduce the gap. It is hoped that these funds will be made available shortly.

30. The repatriation of 612 foreign ex-combatants identified during the disarmament and demobilization process is under way. The International Committee of the Red Cross recently assisted 34 individuals from this group, who were children formerly associated with fighting forces, in their return to their countries of origin. These included 5 returns to Côte d'Ivoire, 16 to Guinea and 13 to Sierra Leone. The remaining foreign ex-combatants are still awaiting repatriation. Meanwhile, the repatriation of a group of 389 Liberian ex-combatants and Armed Forces of Liberia personnel interned in Sierra Leone during the conflict was completed with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 18 May.

VII. Support for security-sector reform

A. Liberian National Police

31. The programme to develop a new, professional Liberian National Police service continued to make steady progress. Between March and May, 401 Liberian National Police and 33 Special Security Service officers graduated from the National Police Academy. A further 1,154 police officers are being trained, including 34 Special Security Service officers who are undergoing close-protection training. Training was extended to include the Liberian Seaport Police in April, when UNMIL took over security responsibilities at the Monrovia Freeport. As at 1 June, 59 Liberian Seaport Police officers had graduated from the Academy, while a further 60 officers are expected to undergo training in June.

32. Meanwhile, the deployment of Liberian police officers to the interior of the country, which began in November 2004, continued to make progress. By May, the Liberian National Police had established a presence in each county and installed a regional command structure. In addition, UNMIL has begun to familiarize probationary police officers participating in field training with police operations in the country's interior and to integrate them into those operations.

33. On 21 April, the city of Antwerp, Belgium, provided UNMIL with weapons and ammunition for use in training the new Liberian National Police personnel. The weapons will be destroyed upon completion of the training programme. The United States of America has made a significant contribution to the police restructuring exercise and is funding the Police Academy's operational costs and trainee stipends, as well as police uniforms. The Liberian National Police have also received donations of motorcycles and radios from China.

34. On 23 May, UNMIL launched a training programme for senior law enforcement managers from the Liberian National Police and the Special Security Service. Meanwhile, 45 Liberian National Police officers are expected to be fully trained as instructors by the end of 2005. They will serve as a core group of trainers, when the new police service assumes responsibility for running the National Police Academy training programme.

35. The new police service is expected to be formally established on 1 July. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has approved a rank and salaries

policy for the new Liberian National Police service. Furthermore, the National Transitional Government has agreed in principle to a proposed demobilization package for those police and Special Security Service officers who have not met basic eligibility standards for the service.

B. Armed Forces of Liberia

36. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has indicated that the estimated cost of decommissioning the Armed Forces of Liberia is $16.4 million. As at 1 June, the National Transitional Government had raised $5 million for this programme, including $1 million of its own resources, a tax advance of $2 million from the Firestone Rubber Plantation and two interest-free loans of $1 million each from China and Ghana. The National Transitional Government plans to provide $6 million in its next budget to meet the cost of pensions for the regular members of the armed forces. This leaves a funding gap of some $5.4 million for the armed forces demobilization programme. I would like to urge Member States to assist in meeting this funding shortfall.

37. On 15 May, Chairman Bryant signed an executive order declaring that the demobilization and retirement process for members of the former Armed Forces of Liberia would commence on 31 May. This decommissioning exercise is expected to be completed by September, following which the recruitment and training exercise for the new armed forces is expected to begin. UNMIL will provide the following support for the training programme: perimeter security at the Barclay Training Centre, the Ministry of Defence and the designated Armed Forces of Liberia training centre; static security at the designated demobilization site starting on 15 June; sector headquarters facilities for use by the recruiting officers; and air transportation for the United States security-sector reform team.

VIII. Elections

38. Preparations for the 11 October national elections continued to make satisfactory progress during the reporting period. The voter registration process, which took place from 25 April to 21 May, was a notable success. There were 1,511 registration centres, supported by 1,039 static and mobile teams, deployed nationwide to conduct the registration. Some 1.3 million voter registration forms have been received.

39. The National Elections Commission, UNMIL and other partners, including non-governmental organizations funded by UNDP and the European Commission, worked together to disseminate information on the voter registration process.

40. During the registration process, UNMIL troops patrolled regularly, while Quick-Reaction Force troops accompanied flights carrying registration materials. Civilian police advised and monitored the Liberian National Police who provided perimeter security at the registration centres. No major incidents were reported during the voter registration period.

41. On 12 May, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution calling for an extension of the voter registration period. However, the National Elections Commission rejected this, asserting that the Commission was the

sole decision-making authority regarding time lines for the electoral process. The International Contact Group on Liberia and UNMIL strongly supported the Commission's position. A petition seeking to extend the voter registration process by a month was also rejected by the Supreme Court. Following negotiations initiated by UNHCR with the National Elections Commission, returning refugees were allowed an additional two-week period for voter registration.

42. As required by the electoral reform law, the National Elections Commission, in close consultation with political parties and other key stakeholders, has developed a methodology for the delimitation of electoral districts and allocation of seats. Guidelines on the establishment of electoral districts were issued on 16 May, and the list of electoral districts will be published on 15 July.

43. The next step in the electoral process is the publication of the preliminary voter registration roll from 30 June to 2 July, to be displayed at each voter registration centre. UNMIL is now focusing on developing operational plans for the polling and counting exercises in October.

United Nations support for the elections

44. UNMIL and the United Nations country team are working in a coordinated manner to support the electoral process and meet weekly to evaluate progress in the preparations for the polls. UNMIL has constructed 17 county electoral offices for use by its personnel. UNMIL troops will assist in providing security throughout the electoral process, in accordance with security plans for each sector. Furthermore, a Mission Election Cell has been established at the UNMIL Force headquarters to coordinate the provision of security and logistical support for the elections.

45. UNMIL's civilian police component is continuing to advise the Liberian National Police on the development of security plans for the run-up to the elections so as to avert the potential for civil unrest. These include contingency measures for polling and post-election counting centres, as well as for political rallies. In addition, UNMIL civilian police will assist the Liberian National Police joint task force units with logistical support for the conduct of mobile patrols, particularly in volatile areas.

46. UNDP is working closely with the European Commission to provide support for the voter education campaign. In May, a delegation from the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute and the Carter Center completed the first of three planned monitoring assessments, following which they called the voter registration process in Liberia credible and a success. These three organizations, together with the International Foundation for Election Systems and the Konrad Adenauer Institute, are also providing other support for the electoral process.

IX. Rule of law

Judicial support

47. UNMIL has continued to provide training and advice to assist in building the capacity of the justice sector. However, these initiatives have been hampered by a

lack of funding, qualified personnel and material resources. Training workshops have been conducted for prosecutors and county attorneys and for 70 clerks of the Supreme Court, circuit courts and specialized courts, while post-training assessments of prosecutors are being carried out in the courts. Training workshops for circuit-court judges, magistrates and justices of the peace will be conducted following the appointments of judicial nominees.

48. UNMIL continues to monitor court cases throughout the country and is also spearheading efforts to facilitate the provision of legal aid services to defendants. Through its Quick-Impact Project Trust Fund, UNMIL is also helping to finance the rehabilitation of a number of courts.

49. In April, UNMIL assisted the Ministry of Justice in convening a meeting of a legislative drafting working group that reviewed and redrafted a number of key laws, including those dealing with rape, human trafficking, juries and the financial autonomy of the judiciary. It is expected that these draft laws will be submitted to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly for enactment.

Corrections

50. During the reporting period, UNMIL provided support to the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Justice, which has contributed to improvements in prison conditions. Funds are urgently needed for the rehabilitation of corrections infrastructure and for system development. Six correctional facilities are currently operational in Bondiway, Buchanan, Monrovia, Kakata, Saniquellie and Gbarnga. However, demand for such facilities is increasing, particularly in areas where courts are reopening. Food, medical supplies and other basic necessities continue to be provided by partners, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

51. Twenty-six newly recruited corrections officers, including seven women, are completing training programmes at the duty stations to which they have been deployed.

X. Public information

52. During the reporting period, the public information component focused on supporting priority programmes of UNMIL and of United Nations agencies, including elections and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. UNMIL Radio can now be heard in most areas of the country. The station has increased its programming on human rights, transitional justice and humanitarian activities. It is also carrying out community-level live broadcasts, during which the public can engage in discussions on issues related to the peace process.

XI. Restoration and consolidation of State authority

53. Further progress was made in extending State authority throughout the country. The appointments of 11 out of 15 county and assistant superintendents have been ratified by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. UNMIL continued to assist the return of Government officials to their duty stations, including 168 internal revenue collectors to 13 revenue-collecting posts, 206 customs officers to

11 rural customs posts and 379 Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization officers. However, resource and logistical constraints remain major obstacles to the restoration of State authority in the interior of the country and continue to hamper the capacity of deployed officials to deliver basic services to the population.

54. In addition, UNMIL is providing support for the institutional reform of Government Ministries and other State institutions, with a view to enhancing their productivity, transparency and accountability.

XII. Restoring proper management of natural resources

55. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has continued to demonstrate a lack of political will to implement measures for the proper control and management of the country's natural resources and to ensure that revenues from these resources are used for the public good. In that regard, UNMIL civil affairs officers and environment and natural resource advisers have continued to provide advice to the Ministry for Lands, Mines and Energy and the Forestry Development Authority on measures that should be taken to ensure the proper management of natural resources. The Mission monitored locations where natural resource exploitation is taking place and have informed the Government accordingly.

56. UNMIL also assisted in the evacuation of people who were illegally mining and hunting in the Sapo National Park. In April, Chairman Bryant and my former Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, launched a plan of action for the proper management of the environment, which was developed by the National Transitional Government of Liberia, in collaboration with UNMIL, UNDP, UNHCR, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Liberia Forestry Initiative, together with several international and local non-governmental organizations. Donors have pledged to provide the estimated $1 million that it will cost to implement the plan.

XIII. Human rights and protection of civilians

57. UNMIL monitoring and protection activities continued throughout the country. The poor investigation of rape and sexual assault cases, particularly those involving children, remained a serious concern. To help improve the situation, the Mission provided support during the investigation and prosecution of a number of such cases and facilitated the provision of social assistance and support for the victims. However, more needs to be done to sensitize the general population about the serious nature of such crimes.

58. In April, UNMIL assisted with the evacuation of an illegal mental health clinic that had been holding 18 people, without treatment and in very poor conditions. Legislation is urgently required to prevent abuse of vulnerable people in clinics and orphanages.

59. Many of the reopened courts are not complying with legal standards and are failing to observe the fair-trial rights of victims and suspects. Prisoners are detained in poor conditions, including in overcrowded prisons, and the rights of prisoners to due process, speedy trials and legal counsel are undermined by the poor operation or

non-existence of courts. The only operational juvenile court is in Monrovia. A large number of cases are not tried, resulting in impunity for offenders. A lack of accountability, which is compounded by the failure of the Government to provide adequate logistical support to the courts and the police, has encouraged corruption and hampered the State's capacity to uphold the rights of victims and suspects.

60. The poor human rights situation at the Guthrie rubber plantation has continued. Ex-combatants continue to violate the fundamental rights of plantation residents with impunity, including by assaulting them and forcing them to tap rubber.

61. Meanwhile, on 23 March, Chairman Bryant signed into law the act establishing the Independent National Commission on Human Rights. In addition, on 12 May, the bill establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was passed by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, and efforts are under way to mobilize funding and other support for its operations.

62. In collaboration with UNDP, the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs and Gender and Development, Liberian civil society and the international donor community, UNMIL is spearheading the formulation of a five-year national human rights action plan for Liberia. Consultations on drafting the plan commenced in May, and a series of workshops will follow. In the light of Liberia's ratification of and accession to key international human rights treaties, the Mission has developed a project to audit the country's laws with a view to assisting the National Transitional Government of Liberia in updating national laws to bring them in line with international standards.

XIV. Humanitarian situation

63. With improved security, United Nations agencies have extended the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Liberia. UNHCR, IOM, WFP and UNMIL have facilitated the voluntary transfer of internally displaced persons from camps in and around Monrovia to their areas of return. The Mission is implementing a plan for the accelerated return of internally displaced persons to their counties of origin, as well as a public sensitization campaign. As at 1 June, some 155,000 internally displaced persons had been assisted in returning to their places of origin, while a further 100,000 have returned independently. UNHCR has provided transportation and non-food items for the returning internally displaced persons, while WFP has provided food rations. Additional resources will be required to support the return of a further 64,000 internally displaced persons.

64. To ensure their safe return, UNMIL has increased patrols on routes used by the returning internally displaced persons. The inter-agency Core Protection Group is finalizing a protection framework for returnees. In the meantime, UNHCR and its partners have been monitoring the return process and intend to further strengthen their protection capacity as activities expand.

65. UNHCR continued to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from the subregion. As at 1 June, an estimated 175,000 refugees had returned spontaneously, while 17,500 had returned in an organized manner with UNHCR assistance. Returning refugees are provided with the same return package and food rations as the internally displaced. The returning populations are also being assisted

through broader reintegration programmes under the Results-Focused Transitional Framework. UNHCR has also rehabilitated a number of roads and bridges and rebuilt schools and clinics in areas to which large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons are returning. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have continued to support the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their counties of origin.

66. WFP currently delivers 6,500 tons of food to 700,000 beneficiaries each month throughout Liberia, including 250,000 internally displaced persons and returnees residing in camps and transit centres and 425,000 schoolchildren.

67. By the beginning of the rice-planting season in early April, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had started a large-scale emergency agricultural assistance programme targeting recent returnees, ex-combatants and vulnerable host communities. FAO has also provided 13,000 beneficiaries in 12 counties with tools, rice seeds and fertilizer, as well as advice and technical support to enable them to restart farming activities.

68. UNICEF has provided some 983 schools with back-to-school supplies, benefiting some 270,000 children. A national consultative workshop recommended the development of a national Accelerated Learning Programme policy to meet increasing demands for the Programme. Of the 5,000 targeted demobilized children, 31 per cent gained access to the Community Education Investment Programme. Five hundred and sixty county and district education officials, teachers and principals were trained in this Programme and in psychosocial counselling skills. Ten youth groups and 800 peer youth educators were trained in preventing HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse and exploitation. Ten additional health facilities were reactivated, with routine immunization introduced in two additional health facilities, bringing to 175 the number of health facilities that provide routine Expanded Programme on Immunization services. Over 1 million children have been immunized against polio in Liberia.

69. The Humanitarian Action Committee, which meets on a bimonthly basis, is most useful in strengthening collaboration between United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

XV. National recovery, reconstruction and development

70. The Results-Focused Transitional Framework annual review meeting, held in Copenhagen on 9 and 10 May, was attended by representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and its international partners. In evaluating the Framework's performance during the past year, the participants noted the progress made, as well as the many challenges that lie ahead. The following priorities were identified for 2005: addressing corruption, ensuring transparency and integrity in fiscal management and providing basic services in the interior of the country to sustain the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. The need to extend the Results-Focused Transitional Framework into 2006 to ensure a structured transition from the Framework to a Millennium Development Goals-based poverty reduction strategy was also recognized.

71. UNMIL, together with several United Nations agencies, has been developing strategies for linking relief and development, in line with the needs of Liberian communities. In that context, UNMIL relief, recovery and rehabilitation and civil affairs officers, in collaboration with FAO, have completed agricultural assessments in Grand Gedeh, Bomi, Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties. On the basis of the outcome of those assessments, FAO will implement small-scale agriculture projects in collaboration with community organizations.

72. UNDP, in collaboration with the World Bank, presented the recommendations of the post-war Rapid Social Assessment to stakeholders, including Government officials, United Nations agencies and non-governmental and civil society organizations, as well as donors. The Rapid Social Assessment provides a framework for participatory, rights-based, community-driven development in Liberia and is a core element of the UNDP community-based recovery programme. In partnership with UNHCR and local implementing partners, UNDP is also supporting 85 rehabilitation microprojects in the areas of water and sanitation, education, health, markets and secondary roads.

73. To further enhance its support for community recovery, UNDP has established field offices in Bong and Grand Gedeh Counties. As part of its global Civil Society Organization Champion Initiative, UNDP has completed a field survey of nearly 800 civil society organizations in all 15 counties. The information collected will be used to develop sustainable partnerships between UNDP and civil society organizations.

XVI. HIV/AIDS

74. The UNMIL HIV/AIDS Unit continued to conduct awareness, sensitization and personal risk assessment sessions for the Mission's personnel. On 4 June, the unit opened two voluntary HIV counselling and testing centres for UNMIL staff. The Unit is also providing training-of-trainers programmes for peer educators, religious leaders, community-based organizations and media practitioners, in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Programme. From 16 May to 10 June, the Unit, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the United States-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a knowledge, attitude and practice survey among UNMIL troops.

75. In collaboration with the National AIDS Control Programme and other partners, UNHCR, through its protection monitoring in the field and by providing HIV/AIDS emergency interventions, has continued to provide assistance to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

XVII. Gender

76. The UNMIL Gender Unit and Gender Task Force continued to mainstream gender activities in all aspects of the Mission's work. The Unit has continued to support the electoral process, including by coordinating funding for women's groups that are promoting women's participation in the elections.

77. The Unit has also provided advice on legislative reforms and rule-of-law mechanisms needed to respond to sexual and gender-based violence and to protect

the rights of women and girls. It continues to provide a gender perspective in the reintegration process for ex-combatants and in the restructuring of the Liberian National Police. The Unit has facilitated the deployment of county gender coordinators from the Ministry of Gender and Development to 14 counties. Training has also been provided to gender desk officers in various Ministries.

XVIII. Sexual exploitation and abuse

78. The UNMIL task force on sexual exploitation and abuse has developed a preventive and investigative strategy, which includes proposals on the relocation of some contingents away from populated areas, the creation of a hotline to receive complaints, improved staff and military welfare and the establishment of a group of professional investigators and technical advisers within the Mission. At the same time, the Force Commander has issued directives for troops on compliance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). He also reinforces the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy during visits to the sectors.

79. Briefings on sexual exploitation and abuse are given to all Mission personnel. In addition, UNMIL is providing a training-of-trainers briefing on sexual exploitation and abuse for all military units and has established focal points at Force and sector headquarters, as well as within military units.

80. UNMIL is working with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to disseminate information, including standard guidelines on the prevention and investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse. UNMIL has established four teams to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Twenty-one investigations have now been completed. While allegations against 11 military personnel were not substantiated, those against 9 military personnel were substantiated, resulting in repatriation on disciplinary grounds of the military personnel involved. One civilian staff member was summarily dismissed.

XIX. Mission support

81. The administrative component of UNMIL has expanded its operations nationwide to strengthen logistical and administrative support for the Mission's components. The major support challenges include the provision of operational capability and critical infrastructure to sustain the Mission and support the electoral process in the most effective and efficient manner.

82. During the coming months, logistical efforts will focus on the consolidation of force sustainment, including the provision of hard wall accommodation, improved utility services, the deployment of newly arrived forces and support for the elections. In line with the joint civilian/Military concept of support plan, work on the priority tasks continues, including the establishment of a forward logistics base at Gbarnga and the upgrading and maintenance of supply routes, so that they can be used during the rainy season.

XX. Regional aspects

83. Progress in the Mission's efforts to stabilize Liberia is linked, to a great extent, to the security situation in the subregion. Setbacks in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire could have a negative effect, as evidenced by the influx of over 10,000 Ivorian refugees into Liberia in November 2004, following disturbances in Côte d'Ivoire. Reports have also indicated that individuals from both sides of the Ivorian conflict, as well as from Guinea, are recruiting fighters from Liberia. UNHCR and WFP have developed a contingency plan in the event of a further influx of refugees from that country. In the meantime, UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) are continuing to conduct coordinated border patrols.

84. UNMIL continued to monitor the situation in the Guinée Forestière region of Guinea, which is a potential flashpoint because of its concentration of refugees from neighbouring countries and its strategic location in relation to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Cross-border liaison between UNMIL and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is also continuing.

85. The Force Commanders of UNMIL, UNOCI and UNAMSIL held their seventh regional Force Commanders meeting in Freetown from 17 to 19 May, during which they reviewed the security situation in the subregion and discussed the standard operating procedures for the three missions' Joint Mission Analysis Cells.

XXI. Observations

86. The progress made in Liberia during the past three months — notably, the successful voter registration exercise, further gains in strengthening the National Police force, the passage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission bill by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, the signing into law of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights act, the return of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees to their counties of origin and the maintenance of a generally stable political and security climate — is encouraging. Furthermore, the commencement of the demobilization of the Armed Forces of Liberia and progress in extending State authority throughout the country, particularly through the deployment of additional local Government officials, have also given momentum to the peace process. The National Transitional Government of Liberia should now focus on building the capacity of local administrations to deliver basic services to the population.

87. Despite the many tangible signs of progress, there are still significant challenges that need to be urgently addressed to ensure that the peace process remains on track. In this regard, the ex-combatants who are resorting to violence, including by threatening to disrupt the upcoming elections, in order to assert their right to participate in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, remain a potential source of instability. In addition, the successful completion of the restructuring of the country's armed forces is key to ensuring the consolidation of durable peace in the country.

88. The prolonged delays in the provision of reintegration opportunities for former combatants and in the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia have been primarily due to funding shortfalls. In that regard, the recent pledges of funding by the European Commission and the Governments of Sweden and the United States of

America for the reintegration programme are most commendable, and I would strongly encourage their early redemption. Member States should also consider the provision of necessary technical and financial support to the National Transitional Government of Liberia to ensure the full implementation of the military restructuring and retraining exercise.

89. The failure of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to improve economic governance is most disappointing. In that regard, the conclusions of the meeting of international partners that financial malfeasance, lack of transparency and an absence of accountability are threatening the success of the transition process are of deep concern. The development of an economic governance action plan by Liberia's international partners, in cooperation with the National Transitional Government, is an innovative and timely initiative. It promises to provide an effective strategy for the Government in ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of State resources. I would recommend that the Council give due consideration to this plan at the earliest opportunity.

90. The remaining six months of the transition period are most important for laying the foundations for a peaceful and democratic society in Liberia. Any efforts to disrupt the electoral process should be expeditiously addressed. It is essential that the Liberian political parties continue to conduct their electoral activities in a peaceful manner. All efforts must be made to ensure that the electoral candidates are able to conduct their electoral campaigns freely and in secure conditions, and that the conditions are established for the holding of elections that are free, fair and credible.

91. I would like to reiterate the recommendation made in my sixth report on UNMIL that the Security Council give favourable consideration to the authorization of an additional formed police unit consisting of 120 officers for an interim period of six months, commencing in August. The deployment of such a unit is urgently required so that UNMIL has the requisite capacity to assist in addressing security emergencies during the electoral period.

92. The overall security climate in the subregion is of concern. Some progress has been made in Côte d'Ivoire towards implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. However, much remains to be achieved, and the continuing insecurity in the country, particularly in the west, is likely to have spillover effects on the fragile stability in Liberia. The continuing reports of the recruitment of Liberian ex-combatants to participate in conflicts in the subregion, as well as the cross-border flows of arms, pose serious threats to regional peace. The Governments in the subregion should urgently take all possible steps to effectively address these critical problems.

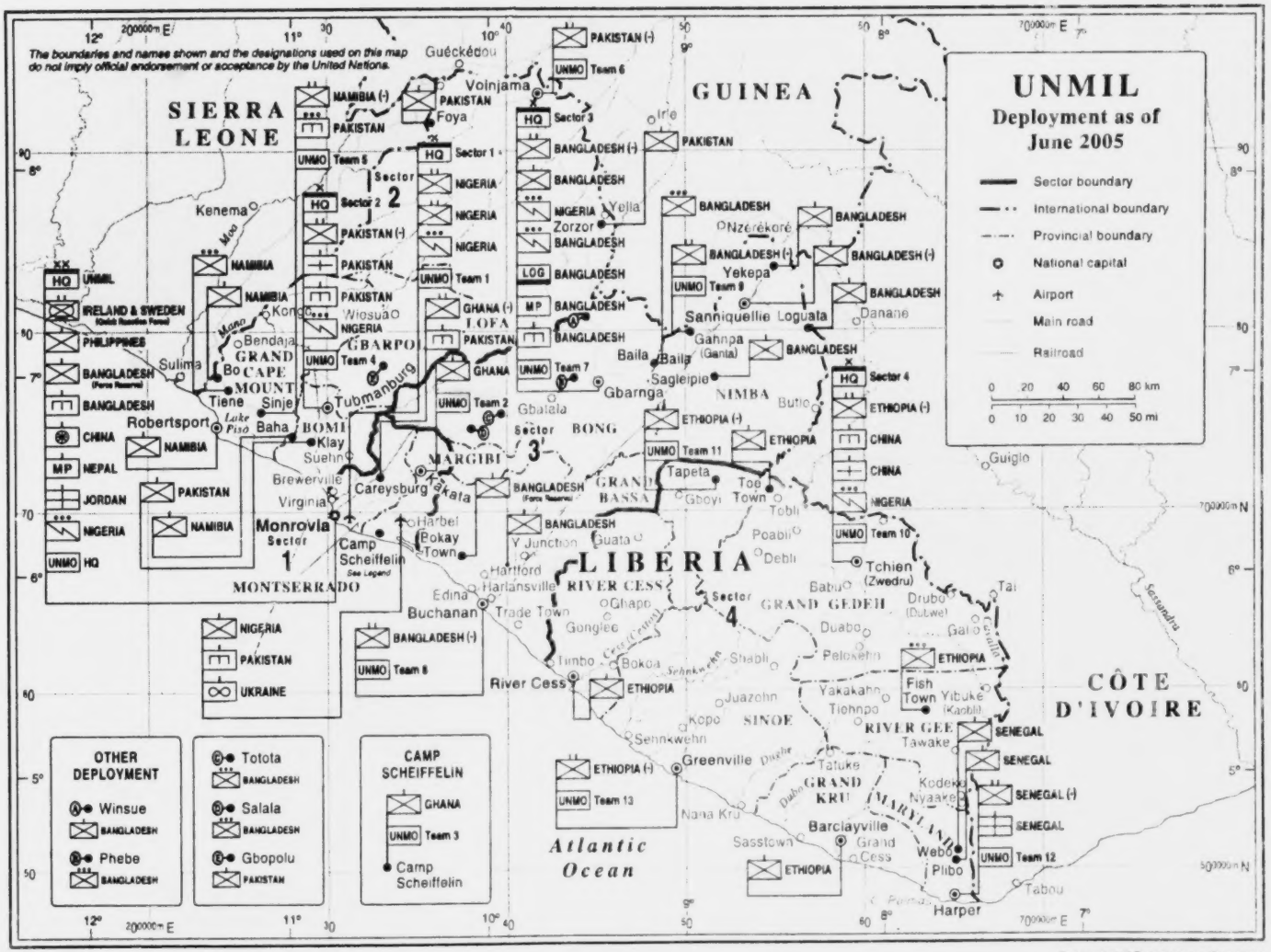
93. In conclusion, I would like to commend my former Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, who completed his assignment in April, as well as my Deputy Special Representative, Abou Moussa, who is the Officer-in-Charge of UNMIL pending the appointment of my new Special Representative, and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for their contribution to the progress made during the period under review. I would also like to express my gratitude to the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and humanitarian organizations, as well as the numerous bilateral donors and international and local non-governmental organizations, for their steadfast and continuing efforts to return peace to Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 1 June 2005

	Military component				*Civilian police component*
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Argentina					2
Bangladesh	17	11	3 188	3 216	13
Benin	3	0		3	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				0	17
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	9	558	572	24
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	17	8	2 544	2 569	
Egypt	8			8	
Fiji				0	30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	1			1	30
Germany			16	16	3
Ghana	11	5	849	865	41
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		9	429	438	
Jamaica				0	10
Jordan	7	9	50	66	140
Kenya	3	4		7	24
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	22
Mali	4	2		6	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	4	855	862	6
Nepal	3	2	40	45	256

	Military component				*Civilian police component*
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officer*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Niger	3			3	3
Nigeria	19	17	1 947	1 983	161
Norway				0	6
Pakistan	16	11	2 740	2 767	23
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	2		5	
Philippines	3	5	165	173	30
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal				0	2
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	17
Samoa				0	17
Senegal	1	3	600	604	10
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	7
South Africa				0	
Sri Lanka				0	11
Sweden		4	227	231	6
Togo		1		1	
Turkey				0	32
Uganda				0	19
United Kingdom		3		3	
Ukraine	3	1	300	304	5
Uruguay				0	2
United States of America	7	7		14	20
Yemen				0	4
Zambia	3			3	29
Zimbabwe				0	33
Total	**197**	**131**	**14 508**	**14 836**	**1 064**


UNMIL
Deployment as of
June 2005
Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
Railroad
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
Sector 1
Sector 2
Sector 3
Sector 4
Monrovia
MONTSERRADO
GBARPO
LOFA
MARGIBI
BONG
NIMBA
GRAND BASSA
RIVER CESS
GRAND GEDEH
SINOE
RIVER GEE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
CAPE MOUNT
BOMI
Camp Scheiffelin
OTHER DEPLOYMENT
Winsue
Phebe
Totota
Salala
Gbopolu
CAMP SCHEIFFELIN
Camp Scheiffelin
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Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section